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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 28, 2006

11. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for December 28, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

#### POLITICAL

12. ZAMAN / BOLGE / EKSPRES: Mayor Aytac Durak, Deputy Governor Mehmet Demir, and Cukurova University Rector Alper Akinoglu attended the opening ceremony of renovated units of the Balcali Hospital of the Cukurova University, such as the Blood Center and General Surgery Unit. Following some media organizations' reports on accommodation problems experienced by the relatives of patients at Balcali Hospital Rector Akinoglu announced that they were planning to build a hotel on the upper floors of a parking facility near the hospital in order to offer a convenient place for the relatives of the patients who come to Adana from nearby provinces in order to take care of their kin. Akinoglu made a call to Adana businessmen to support construction of the hotel since they were not able to raise the funds needed for it on their own.

13. HURRIYET: Following remarks of Ahmet Turk, the National Chairperson of the DTP, who said that if Turkey were to employ democratic and civilian methods in finding a solution to the Kurdish issue, the DTP would then call on the PKK to either sweep the mines it had laid or to indicate where it planted them, a senior general working in the southeastern Turkey said that he PKK had no maps in hand that showed the locations of each mine they had planted in Turkey. The general gave further information about improvised mines PKK was using and said that there were no specific locations assigned that the terrorist organizations would plant their mines to. According to the general DTP had no idea about the structure and tactics of the PKK, and that DTP was wrongfully assuming that they could influence the PKK. However, the general pointed out that the PKK was playing with DTP for its own advantage.

14. RADIKAL / EVRENSEL / TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: Four members of DTP provincial party administration in Ankara, who were detained the previous day by Ankara police reportedly because they participated in a religious ceremony held in Ankara for a deceased PKK member and because of a press announcement they held on December 2 about the cease-fire, were released yesterday after being arraigned.

15. TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: DTP Chairperson Ahmet Turk dismissed recent news reports that appeared with claims about his frustration with the people of Diyarbakir who reportedly "did not extend much support" to the 900-person "Walk for Peace"

convoy that traveled from Diyarbakir to Ankara last week to support the cease-fire process (see press summary for December 18, 19 and 25). According to Turk, those reports were aiming to sour ties between DTP and Kurdish people. Turk said that his remarks then were merely self-criticism fired against the DTP party organization, and it was not intended for, or meant to point a finger at, the Diyarbakir people. Turk added that the party organization was able to take that criticism well.

¶6. TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: Mus Prosecutor's Office started an investigation against Siddik Genc, DTP Mus Provincial Chairperson, because of a speech Genc delivered during the "Walk for Peace" activity held at the onset of last week.

¶7. TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: The court issued a 1200 YTL (approximately 850 USD) fine against DTP District Chairperson of Agri's Dogubeyazit district who was standing trial for using the non-Turkish 'W' letter in an application document requesting permission from the subgovernor's office to hold 2006 Newruz celebrations and who used the same letter in the banners.

¶8. EVRENSEL / TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: Thirteen villagers, who were standing trial for hurling stones and eggs at U.S. soldiers that came in a convoy to Sanliurfa's Suruc district in March 2003 to recover the remnants of a misfired Tomahawk missile, have been acquitted by the 2nd First Instance Court.

¶9. TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: The party organization of DTP in Hakkari's Yuksekova district held a meeting called "Peace and Democratic Solution for the Kurdish Issue." Yuksekova Mayor (from DTP), members of Free Citizens' Initiative and other civil society organizations, and people attended the meeting. It is stressed in the meeting that Kurds should give up voting for

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parties like AKP, CHP and MHP which have reportedly been nurturing animosity against Kurds. During the meeting, people gave messages to embrace the cease-fire process more strongly.

#### SECURITY

¶10. TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: District Jandarma Command Teams in Sanliurfa's Suruc district conducted a raid on a village early yesterday morning upon reported intelligence received and as a result of permission given by the Suruc Prosecutor's Office. Teams, who searched all the houses, were able to find nothing and left the village later.

#### ECONOMY

¶11. SABAH (GUNEY): The daily portrays Chairperson of Adana Chamber of Commerce (ACC) as drinking a glass of orange juice at a shop in downtown Adana to support the campaign Sabah (GuneY) daily recently launched to increase the consumption of citrus fruit in the Adana province.

#### CRIME / LAW ENFORCEMENT:

¶12. RADIKAL: Masked thieves with long-barreled rifles stopped a car in Van's Baskale district and stole a total of 16,000 YTL (approximately 11,200 USD) and three cell phones from the people in the car.

¶13. BOLGE / ZAMAN: Mersin police found 13 kilograms of heroin in a hidden section of a small passenger bus. The heroin was brought to Mersin via Van after it entered the country from Iran, said the Security Director of Mersin. It would then be transported through Istanbul to the European countries to be marketed there. Four people in the vehicle were detained by the police.

#### CULTURE / SOCIETY / ENVIRONMENT

¶14. HURRIYET / TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI / CNNTURK ONLINE /

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / SABAH (GUNEY) / RADIKAL / ZAMAN: An avalanche killed a 55-year-old member of a crew working to clear the snow-covered roads between Hakkari's Yuksekova and Semdinli districts. Another crew member was wounded in the incident. Separately, 22 passengers in a small bus stranded in snow on a road in one of the villages of the Cukurca district were rescued by the teams working to clear the roads from snow. Due to adverse weather conditions schools in Bitlis; Bitlis's Tatvan and Guroymak districts; Erueh's Siirt district; Mardin's Omerli district; Van's Bahcesaray, Caldiran, Baskale and Ercis districts have been closed for one day. Schools in Batman, Sirnak and Igrid provinces have been closed for three days. Snowfall forced the closure of the main road that connected Diyarbakir to Bingol and Mardin provinces. Turkish Airlines cancelled a morning flight between Istanbul and Diyarbakir due to the icing spotted on Diyarbakir Airport's runway yesterday. Eleven flights from Diyarbakir to Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir and Antalya provinces were also cancelled the previous day. Roads to the thousands of villages and hamlets are blocked in many provinces of the eastern and southeastern Turkey. Snow reached to one foot in Hakkari and to two feet in Mardin city centers. A total of 114 people went to the hospitals because of fractures caused by falling on slippery roads in Diyarbakir in the last two days.

¶15. TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: DTP called off its program that would have Ahmet Turk, National Chairperson of DTP, and Aysel Tugluk, Vice-Chairperson, to work out ways to turn the cease-fire process into a state of permanent peace in Batman and Tunceli provinces, due to the adverse weather conditions in the region (see press summary for December 27).

¶16. TOPLUMSAL DEMOKRASI: The daily comments on the incident that took place on December 19 and 20 in the Mersin University between the leftist oriented students and ultra-nationals students. Thirteen students were arrested after the event. The anti-riot teams had difficulty quelling the clash between the students then. According to the daily, the authorities refrained to date from initiating legal actions against the ultra-nationalist students who allegedly "attacked the leftist oriented Kurdish students in the campus", and tacitly gave support to the ultra-nationalist students. However, the local dailies such as Bolge and Ekspres reported last week that "200 leftist students attacked the students who were believed to be

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ultra-nationalists." (Note: The last sentence is from December 20 editions of Bolge and Ekspres dailies. End Note.)  
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